

Faculty Name: Sonia Ragir

Location: Animal Behavior and Conservation—Hunter College North 608B

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Faculty Research Area

General Area of Research

Animal behavior and expression of emotion, growth and development, social, object and fantasy play, language formation and evolution of culture, the evolution of culture in humans and animals.

Description of Current Research

Bonobo social play with objects, dolphin production and play with bubbles, interactions between learning and evolution, development of communicative gestures and imitation in humans, and the early social development in human twins. The development of online, open source software, Griffin VC, for coding the real time behavior of one or more subjects from video records. A method for building a consensual description & video archive of animal emotions using GriffinVC and the population of dolphins at the National Aquarium.

Requirements and Benefits for Student

Essential and Desirable Background Knowledge and Skills

Essential: commitment to observational and/or developmental research

Desirable: basic computer and statistical skills, background in behavior and developmental psychology/anthropology

Expected Responsibilities

Assisting in video data collection, formulating study questions, set-up of behavioral ethograms, analysis of behavior from video, and data analysis

Time commitment: a minimum of one full day a week, some flexibility

Expected Benefits

Develop skills in research methodology, behavioral analysis, developmental and cognitive research, and applied animal behavior in captive and field settings.

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